

Council On Aging
Board Meeting
December 13, 2006

Members in Attendance: John Concordia, Marty Green, Paul Keegan, Helen McLaughlin, Tim Swiss, Helene Tanenholtz, Board Member Lillian Goodman was excused.

Staff in Attendance: Michele Bauwens, Sharon Yager

Guests in Attendance: John Belding, Central MA Agency on Aging (CMAA)

I. Minutes

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00am. The November minutes were reviewed and unanimously accepted with one clarification in the first line of Liaison Reports. It will now read, "Helene reported that they have been planning monthly programs for seniors."

II. New Business

John Belding from CMAA reported on how Title III (the Older Americans Act Fund) works. This is a federal program. The money first goes to Boston, then is allocated to the chosen communities/organizations around the state. Population plays a role in how it is allocated. He explained the following categories of support involved:

- 3B = Supportive Services (medical transportation, elder home repair, crisis aid).
- 3C = Nutrition Services (nutrition sites, e.g. Meals on Wheels).
- 3D = Health Promotion (e.g., we received a grant 4 years ago for specific medical equipment to assist in glucose and podiatry screenings).
- 3E = Family Caregiver Support Program.

He explained what tends to get funded. Usually 90% of the funds are already spoken for in order to support specific ongoing programs (e.g. for unique legal and guardianship programs where there otherwise would be none). It's a very competitive process. Most projects chosen will fill a short term need or a gap in funding. There is a 2-year funding cycle, and the 2nd year is dependent upon the organization's performance in the first year.

The next RFP for the 2008-09 funding cycle will start again this spring.

- At the end of February or beginning of March, we will be notified by mail as to what the funding priorities will be for this cycle. (We can also check for updates on their website www.seniorconnection.org. There are helpful data summaries available on this site too, and we can compare Shrewsbury to other similar towns.)
- After receiving this notice, the first step for us will be to submit a Letter of Intent. If our request is deemed appropriate (with respect to the funding priorities), we would then receive a complete proposal packet to submit.

The following questions should be briefly addressed in this Letter of Intent:

1. What type of program do we intend to have? What community need do we intend to address?
 2. What is our goal for it? How do we intend to address it - what approach or methods will we use?
 3. The cost to run the program? Usually the request is for a few thousand dollars or less. (Our previous award for the medical equipment was \$2,000.)
- In May, all proposals will be reviewed.
 - In June, the selected proposals will be approved at their meeting.
 - In July, the organizations selected will receive notice of their award.
 - On October 1, 2008, the money will be received.
 - If awarded, we will need to report on how the money is spent. Some changes in the reporting system will be made this year, i.e., the statistics and the invoice portions of the report will be combined.

III. Chairman's Comments

Paul Keegan reported that on December 5th he attended a meeting of the Grandparents Support Group that is run by Elder Services of Worcester. This raised his awareness as to how many grandparents are raising their grandchildren. This group was started by a psychiatrist in the area.

Recommendation: He recommended we do some further research into the group since it may prove helpful for Shrewsbury's seniors as well. He recommended we try running a mention in the newsletter in order to gauge the level of local interest.

A check from Astra Pharmaceuticals for \$427 was also presented to the group at this meeting. The Busy Hands group had donated knitted items to Astra, which they then raffled to raise the funds. Paul's wife was part of the Astra group that handled this.

IV. Director's Comments

Sharon Yager introduced Michele Bauwens, the newest member of the COA staff. Michele has taken Vicky Pellegrino's place as Assistant to the COA Director.

Security is still a concern in installing the *My Senior Center* software. A separate fiber optic cable will be run underground to the Senior Center in order to limit access to the Town's network and reduce the security risk.

MIS is still working on rebuilding the computer lab's hard drives due to the virus contracted. They'd almost been completely rebuilt when they got reinfected. It's hoped they'll be up and running by the end of the month. From February to April, two of the terminals will again be dedicated to the use of the AARP tax volunteers. (There are still some tax volunteer positions available at this time.)

The COA's staff holiday party will be held on December 14th from 2-4pm. Staff, volunteers, board members, the Friends, department heads, and selectmen were all invited.

V. Liaison Reports

Friends of the SCC, Inc.

Helene reported that the traditional Friends holiday party would be held on December 19th. An a capella choir will perform. Karyn Polito will present various options to address tax and housing cost concerns in January. Helene also gave a reminder that the Friends primary functions are to raise funds and provide outreach to the community. Yet it is also a social group, which is open to anyone and easy to join (only \$5).

Elder Services, Worcester/Outreach

Sharon reported on Walter's statistics for November which was a busy month for him. He missed the last Elder Services meeting due to his vacation, but Sharon read through the minutes of the meeting and made note of the important changes. One change is that their statistics will now include data on home delivered meals.

The SMOC portion of Walter's statistics consisted mainly of fuel assistance applications or recertifications. He also makes a good deal of referrals to other service agencies when necessary.

Sharon and Michele attended the most recent MCOA quarterly meeting. 9C cuts may affect the formula grant since Romney vetoed the 'rainy day fund' which resulted in a deficit. This will be brought to the incoming administration's attention. It is of concern because we are already in the process of spending what was expected. The formula grant amounts to 20% of our overall budget, and it only arrives later in the fiscal year in one lump sum.

Recommendation: That the Town Manager be apprised of this in advance so that plans can be made to counteract it if necessary.

Sharon reported that Dan has been appointed to the transition team to be chaired by Tim Murray. Also, that if the cuts do come pass it would be the first time this has happened during her tenure here.

VI. Old Business

911 calls from the Senior Center's meeting rooms are still a safety issue. They still show at dispatch only as town hall numbers, not specifically as Senior Center numbers. If one makes such a call from the Senior Center, one must be very specific as to where the emergency is taking place.

Recommendation: That this be looked into again.

Tax Work Off Program

Sharon reported that she and Michele met with staff from the Accounting and Treasurer's offices who assisted in processing the tax work off "refunds". Out of the 20 slots allotted for this,

seventeen completed the program. Several of the participants did many more hours above the 95 necessary for the maximum refund. Three of the participants did not complete the recommended hours, but will receive a pro-rated refund according to the number of volunteer hours completed. Since each participant is considered a temporary employee, they first must be entered into the computer and then deleted each year they participate. This process will be completed soon and the refunds will be available through ING starting December 20th.

The next step will be to set up a meeting where the participants can be assisted in receiving their money. A script and/or buddy system will be needed.

Recommendations:

- *Marty Green volunteered to help each participant make his/her call if we set up a schedule of appointments.*
- *Next year we will need to make sure that we receive a copy of each participant's August tax bill since this is the first one mailed out to residents for the following fiscal year (which is the applicable year for the program).*

Flu Shots

The count for the flu shots given was 382. *Recommendation: Bring the pneumonia count to next board meeting.*

Wellness Expo

Sharon reported that the Wellness Expo's goal of reaching the baby boomers fell short. It was estimated that about 70 people attended, even after the hours were changed to allow people to attend after work. Approximately half of that 70 filled out the feedback survey.

Recommendations:

- *If the event is repeated, survey questions should be revised for clarity. It was unclear on the screenings section whether respondents were asking for more of what we already offer or were reporting that they actually attended these screenings.*
- *To advertise the screenings scheduled on local cable in order to reach a wider audience (even though the schedule already appears in the newsletter).*
- *At this point, it may not make sense to repeat the event next year given the turnout vs. staff time involved (especially considering that there is currently no volunteer coordinator).*

Budget

The budget was presented, with no major changes – the budget workshop suggestions were included. Salaries were then adjusted slightly to be based on a 52.2 week schedule per year rather than a 52 week schedule. The next steps are:

- January – Town Manager meets with Sharon and Paul.
- February, 2nd & 3rd Saturdays – Finance Committee meets.

Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning workshop was set up for **January 3rd at 9:30AM** (with a snow date of January 17th at 9:30AM). This workshop will be to start preparing for the next 5 year cycle or 2007-2012. The previous strategic plan covered the years 1996-2001 and 7 key components were included. NCOA also has a guide that assists in the entire process. There is an acronym used as a guideline to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). It usually takes about 6-9 months to complete a strategic plan.

Recommendations:

- *Sharon will bring copies of the previous strategic plan to the workshop. Also, copies of what COA has submitted for the past 4 or 5 annual reports will be brought.*
- *Invite James McCrohon, who participated last time, back to assist.*

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VII. Other

RE: The complaint from a resident from Francis Gardens about the property not being clean and running out of hot water.

Recommendation: Refer this to Walter to handle.

RE: Funding from the Shrewsbury Housing Authority.

Recommendation: That we either attend their meetings, which are open to the public, or that we invite their director, Dennis Osborn, here for our January meeting in order to improve communication between our organizations.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55AM.